

BRAC Advisory Group Meeting

May 20, 2009

7pm – 9pm

Buddy Ford Nature Center

Roll Call –

Present:

Jim Turkel, Chief, Belvoir Integration Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sean Wachutka, Program Manager, BRAC 133 Integrated Program Office
Mr. Travis Edwards, Public Affairs BRAC Outreach Chief
John Komoroske, Planning Commission
Jayme Blakesley, Alexandria Transportation Commission
Jerry Dawson, Duke Realty
Geoffrey Goodale – Vice Chair, Brookville-Seminary Valley
Julie Edelson, Lincolnia Hills/Heywood Glen
Mark Benedict, Parkside of Alexandria
Dick Somers, Seminary Park Community Association
Dave Dexter - Chair, Seminary West
Nancy Jennings, Seminary Hill
Ronald Sturman, Seminary Heights
Kathy Burns, West End Business Association
Kai Reynolds, JBG

Not Present:

Colonel Moffatt, Fort Belvoir Deputy Garrison Commander for Transformation and BRAC
Dr. Gueverra, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership
Dave Cavanaugh, Seminary Ridge

City Staff:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Ravi Raut, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
Pat Mann, Department of Planning and Zoning
Pat Escher, Department of Planning and Zoning

VDOT:

Ronaldo T. “Nic” Nicholson, VDOT Regional Transportation Director for the Northern Virginia Megaprojects

1. May 13th minutes need to be reviewed and adopted by the group before they are posted on the web page. Comments are due to staff by early next week.

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2. Advisory Group Letter to City Council Discussion:

There was considerable discussion about the proposed letter to be submitted to the City Council (Council). Dick Somers proposed that the letter should recommend that the Council adopt a resolution to: express support for direct access from I-395 to Mark Center; have a full analysis be conducted of the potential impact of such direct access from I-395 on traffic flows in all affected areas in proximity to Mark Center Group; and halt the implementation of road improvements approved by the City in 2004 until the analysis is completed. It also was suggested that the letter should urge the Council to take action to bring all of the necessary parties to the table for purposes of developing effective transportation and traffic mitigation strategies, including Duke Realty, the Army, VDOT, the FHWA, the community and City staff. Numerous members of the Advisory Group expressed support for these proposals.

Duke Realty expressed concern about delaying the road improvements. Duke Realty stated that, in order to have the road improvements completed before the opening of the DoD's Mark Center facility in September 2011, Duke Realty needs to have their design for road improvements finalized by Thanksgiving, begin the ROW acquisition and start construction not later than April 2010. Duke Realty asserted that the letter should include the risks/ramifications that may occur if the improvements are not in place prior to the Mark Center facility opening. Duke Realty considers the proposed road improvements as the first step to the other potential improvements that may be required, as determined by the on going VDOT transportation studies.

The Corps of Engineers stated that the Corps and the Advisory Group goals are aligned, and the Corps will review the possibilities of delaying the road improvements, or maybe constructing some of the improvements or constructing all the road improvements and then removing some of the road improvements, if warranted. Some members of the Advisory Group felt that the last alternative would be disruptive to the community.

Geoffrey Goodale suggested that it would be beneficial if City staff could conduct the kind of full analysis proposed by Dick Somers by late Fall 2009. It was proposed that such an analysis could evaluate, among other things, projected traffic impacts on the affected areas under the following scenarios: (1) no road improvements are made; (2) all of the road improvements approved by the City in 2004 are implemented and no direct access is created from I-395 to Mark Center; and (3) which road improvements approved by the City in 2004 would or would not be beneficial if direct access from I-395 to Mark Center is created.

Geoffrey Goodale was asked to summarize and synthesize what had been proposed should be included in the letter. He stated that it had been proposed that the letter urge the Council to adopt a resolution in which the Council:

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- a. expresses strong support in principle for direct access from I-395 to Mark Center;
- b. requests City staff to conduct a full analysis of the potential impact of such direct access from I-395 on traffic flows in all affected areas in proximity to Mark Center; and
- c. halts implementation of road alterations approved in connection with the 2004 SUP for Mark Center until the full analysis is completed.

He also indicated that it had been recommended that the letter make reference to the timing considerations raised by Duke Realty, and that in light of such considerations, the analysis would need to be completed by City staff by October, and that the Council should vote on the resolution before it adjourns at the end of June 2009. He further noted that it had been recommended that letter request that the Council take action to help bring all of the parties to the table for purposes of designing effective transportation and traffic mitigation strategies.

The Advisory Group voted to adopt the letter with the discussed modifications to the language – the vote as follows:

Yes

Jayne Blakesley, Alexandria Transportation Commission
Geoffrey Goodale – Vice Chair, Brookville-Seminary Valley
Julie Edelson, Lincolnia Hills/Heywood Glen
Mark Benedict, Parkside of Alexandria
Dick Somers, Seminary Park Community Association
Dave Dexter - Chair, Seminary West
Nancy Jennings, Seminary Hill
Kathy Burns, West End Business Association
Kai Reynolds, JBG

No

Jim Turkel, Chief, Belvoir Integration Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jerry Dawson, Duke Realty

Abstain

John Komoroske, Planning Commission

It was agreed that the proposed letter would be submitted to the City next week, and the Advisory Group requested that the matter be placed on the Council's June 13 docket.

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3. Nick Nicholson, Regional Transportation Program Director at VDOT, discussed the current VDOT studies:
 - a. Direct access/Interchange Justification Study (IJS) for the HOT lanes - provide another slip ramp on the south side at Seminary Road/I-395 interchange
 - b. In line station at Seminary Road,
 - c. BRT – feasibility and routes
 - d. Direct access/Interchange Justification Study (IJS) for the Mark Center direct access from I-395

Nick gave a very general time line for the Mark Center direct access study - the IJS draft will be completed and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) by the end of the year - FHWA will comment and vet the study to the public- once the study is reviewed and approved - then VDOT will have to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – which will require either an Environmental Assessment – (a shorter study) or Environmental Impact Analysis– (a more complex study) – the time frame of these studies can range from 4 to 6 months up to 2 years depending on the magnitude of the impacts – then funding for the access ramp needs to be procured and finally the design/build construction of the ramp which would take another 2-2 1/2 years for a total of 4-1/2 to 5 1/2 years before the Mark Center direct access improvements would be in place.

4. Pat Escher, P&Z development planning staff, proposed conceptual site design

Pat discussed the very conceptual site design that would facilitate the internal site circulation by creating a circular road around the north parking garage, allowing for additional access to the north parking garage, providing additional areas for buses/shuttles to load and unload and enhance vehicular cueing. Staff also looked at the potential of locating the direct access road connecting the existing eastern road between the CNA building and the Duke building. The location of the direct access route was conceptually reviewed by staff - it needs a more detailed analysis.

5. Pat Mann, P&Z neighborhood planning staff, discussed the Beauregard Small Area Plan.

There are two main components – the review of existing and potential new land use designations and a transportation evaluation component. The land use component is a smaller land area. The transportation component that will assess the City's Transportation Plan as it relates to the area and it will review street intersections on Seminary and Beauregard beyond the land use planning area's boundaries. Small Areas Plans can cost up to \$600,000. The City is applying to the

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Federal Government to receive funding through BRAC funds that are available to impacted communities.

6. Community discussion:

- a. Financial ramifications due to the lost of a tax base due to that this will be a Federal installation, not subject to local jurisdictions tax requirements;
- b. TMP should not mitigate traffic impacts – it should fix them;
- c. City's position that the necessary traffic studies for Mark Center have already been done with previous approvals; see discussion above
- d. Army providing less parking than the DSUP approval, but is providing adequate parking per the City regulations;
- e. Accept the DoD is coming to Mark Center;
- f. Provide direct shuttle to King St., Pentagon and Springfield Metro; and
- g. Mark Center employees should not be able to park at Southern Towers

7. Meeting Adjourned